

## 9.0 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This chapter discusses significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance, as required under NEPA 40 CFR § 1502.16 and CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(b).

### Alternatives A, B, and C

#### Noise

Noise levels are anticipated to exceed the abatement criteria in the southern portion of the study area. The southern segment of Bautista Canyon is currently the least traveled portion of the study area and, as noted, the impact is a result of increased sound energy from additional vehicle pass-by events during the peak travel hour. While noise levels would not exceed the 67 dBA impact threshold, they are predicted to increase by more than 12 dBA. As discussed in Section 3.5.5, noise barriers are most effective in urban areas where development densities make them feasible from an engineering and cost perspective. The cost at an estimated \$60 per square foot would be close to \$600,000. For a single property, this is not a reasonable expenditure to obtain a small noise reduction for a noise level already 20 dBA below the noise abatement criteria. Thus, noise abatement would be considered unreasonable and, therefore, is not recommended for further study. Noise impacts in the southern portion of the study area would remain adverse and unmitigable.

#### Visual Resources

As discussed in Section 3.10, project implementation could have an adverse effect on a scenic vista and could substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings. The proposed road would be a dominant human-made feature that would change the scale of the landscape experience, primarily when viewed from a driver's perspective, because the proposed action would realign the roadway from its canyon floor location. As noted in Section 3.10, measures implemented as part of project design and as mitigation would reduce visual impacts relative to the thresholds of significance defined in Section 3.10.3, and would ensure the project complies with the VQO visual management standards defined by SBNF for the project area.

#### Fire Hazard and Risk

Implementation of the proposed action could increase the potential for exposure to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires because of the higher traffic and overall use of the canyon. The exposure of people to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires for the project area would remain a significant and unmitigated effect. However, the proposed project would improve access to the SBNF for emergency vehicles, including fire equipment, which would offset, in part, increased wild fire risk or public exposure to other hazards.